

# Efficiency and Productivity Plan 2026/27

April 2026



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## Foreword

As we launch our Efficiency and Productivity Plan 2026/27, Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS) is committed to delivering the best possible services to the communities we serve, and we recognise that this requires constant attention to operational performance and financial sustainability.



This Efficiency and Productivity Plan sets out a range of activities designed to enhance the service we provide.

We are committed to embracing new ways of working, identifying efficiencies, and driving positive change across the organisation. This plan aligns to our Community Risk Management Plan and our Standards of Operational Response and the associated strategic annual delivery plans. We also recognise, like many other public sector partners, that the uncertainty about our financial future requires us to be agile and adaptable in our approach, and therefore, we have developed a plan that puts us in a positive position to meet any challenges that lie ahead but also ensure we continue to drive delivery against the Commissioner's Safe and Sound Plan.

Looking towards the future with positivity, we know that we have committed and skilled staff across the Service who can help us deliver our vision. We are confident that by working together and focusing our efforts on delivering results, we can continue to drive improvements in productivity and efficiency while maintaining the highest standards of professionalism and quality.

The Efficiency and Productivity Plan is an important tool for NFRS, but it is more than just a document. It is a statement of our commitment to putting the communities we serve first and at the centre of everything we do. It is also, an affirmation of our dedication to the people who make our organisation what it is today. We must work together to make this plan a reality and to ensure that NFRS continues to be a Service that our communities can rely on to keep them safe.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Nikki Watson'.

Nikki Watson  
Chief Fire Officer

## Introduction

This Productivity and Efficiency Plan sets out the ongoing financial challenge currently faced by the Service and illustrates the recent transformation savings that have been delivered by the Service.

The Fire and Rescue [National Framework](#) sets a requirement that Fire and Rescue Authorities (FRAs) produce and publish annual efficiency plans. There is a specific requirement from the Minister of State for Crime, Policing and Fire that from 2024/25, FRAs produce plans that not only cover planned efficiencies, but also their plans for increasing productivity.

As part of the 2021/22 Spending Review, the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) and the Local Government Association (LGA) proposed that across Fire and Rescue Services (FRSs) in England, the fire and rescue sector could create 2% of non-pay efficiencies and to increase productivity by 3% by 2024/25. This Productivity and Efficiency Plan will help the NFCC, LGA and Home Office to collate evidence and to assess likely progress at national level against the agreed spending review goals. It is published on the Fire and Rescue Service website so that it can be scrutinised by local people and taxpayers in Northamptonshire.

The Service's strategy for the provision of services is driven by the Community Risk Management Plan (CRMP). The new CRMP covering the period 2025-2030 can be found as per the link: [Community Risk Management Plan \(CRMP\) 2025-30](#)

The Community Risk Management Plan and this Productivity and Efficiency Plan is supported by the approved Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP), which sets out how the Service will fund the plan. The MTFP is based on a number of assumptions, which are detailed within this document. It should be noted that whilst this plan has been drafted alongside the current draft CRMP, should any changes be necessary an update version shall be published.

This document contains links to other relevant documents and websites and should be read in conjunction with those.

## Part 1: Primary Information - Budget & Income

### **Financial Context**

Fire Governance transferred from Northamptonshire County Council (NCC) to the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (PFCC) on 1 January 2019, and the organisation became Northamptonshire Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority (NCFRA) as at that date.

### **The historical financial challenges**

Northamptonshire County Council were well known. Northamptonshire Fire had not been immune to the challenges whilst under NCC governance and had been subject to significant efficiency savings requirements for some years which seriously impacted on the ability to deliver effective Fire services within the county.

As such, Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue transferred with no reserves, no capital programme and a minimal revenue budget which had been subject to austerity for some years.

The governance transfer was predicated on a three-year financial stability plan to build reserves, implement a capital programme and go some way to establishing a resilient revenue budget. This included building in extra costs to provide support structures and other professional services costs required to service a separate organisation. Following support from the Home Office for council tax flexibility, these stability targets were achieved by the end of 2021/22.

### **The current financial context**

Whilst Fire has a more resilient base budget, the challenges are not over, and with inflation and cost pressures significantly higher than funding assumptions, further efficiency savings are required to balance the budget over the medium term. Given the historic budget cuts already made to Fire during NCC governance, and with an already lean revenue budget, there are fewer opportunities to realise efficiencies than other services, let alone from non-staff budgets. In fact, the requirement has been to invest in key areas to build resilience and ensure delivery of effective services.

With increasing financial pressures, this plan aims to support our strategic priorities and identify areas where we can make efficient use of our resources while maintaining the highest standard of service delivery. Through effective budgeting, resource allocation and proactive measures to identify cost-saving opportunities, we aim to improve our financial efficiency without compromising on delivering our vision and mission.

<b>BUDGET (£000)</b>		
<b>Revenue Expenditure</b>	<b>2025/26</b>	<b>2026/27</b>
Direct Employee	20,009	21,913
Indirect Employee	4,810	4,904
Premises	2,264	2,485
Transport	596	1,124
Supplies and Services	8,462	8,049
Capital Financing	892	1,073
Other	(1,394)	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>35,638</b>	<b>39,648</b>
<b>Income</b>	<b>2025/26</b>	<b>2026/27</b>
Actual Received from Precept	(21,202)	(24,140)
Local Government Finance Settlement	(9,831)	(13,493)
Other Grants	(2,690)	0
Income Raised Locally	(1,915)	(2,015)
<b>Total</b>	<b>(35,638)</b>	<b>(39,648)</b>

<b>RESERVES (£000)</b>					
	<b>2024/25</b>	<b>2025/26</b>	<b>2026/27</b>	<b>2027/28</b>	<b>2028/29</b>
General Reserves	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000
Earmarked Revenue Reserves	2,370	982	1,106	1,227	1,358
of which MRP reserve					
Earmarked Capital Reserves	2,840	2,339	314	0	0
Other Reserves					
of which revenue	0	0	0	0	0
of which capital	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,210</b>	<b>5,321</b>	<b>3,420</b>	<b>3,227</b>	<b>3,358</b>

### Precept

After a successful bid to the Treasury Northamptonshire Fire's Band D properties precept were allowed to increase above the national referendum limit and have been increased by £10 from 2025/26 to 2026/27, which across the county equates to an uplift of 12.44% for NFRS. However, given the historic under funding of NCFRA, the increase in income of £2.938m is still not enough to offset the financial challenges the service faced in total, which have evolved following:

- Fire Fighter Pay awards;
- The Cost of Living and subsequent inflation crisis
- Aging Property costs and dilapidations
- Replacement programmes for equipment and fleet

Alongside the increase in precept, the number of dwellings has increased significantly since 2019 and continued to do so during 2025/26 and is expected to do so throughout the medium term. However, whilst the national funding formula fire has been reviewed the increase still falls below the requirement for Northamptonshire given the levels of increased demand that these new homes are bringing. Furthermore, some of the new properties do not generate income, as they are exempt, but contribute to demand such properties include student accommodation.

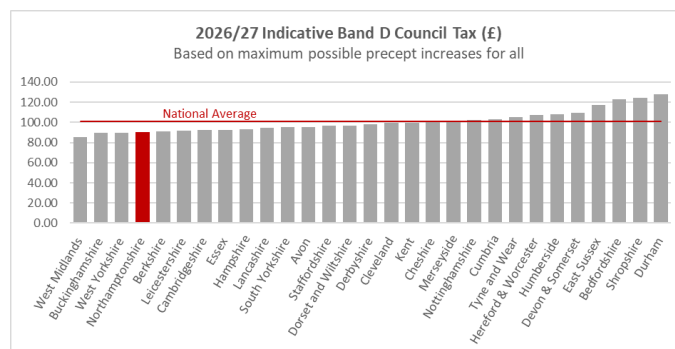
The amount of funding from precept compared to last year and forecast into the future is as follows:

<b>Precept changes</b>			
	<b>2024/25</b>	<b>2025/26</b>	<b>2026/27</b>
<b>Band D Council Tax rate</b>	<b>£75.39</b>	<b>£80.39</b>	<b>£90.39</b>
	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>
<b>Total Precept Base</b>	<b>19,489</b>	<b>21,202</b>	<b>24,140</b>
<b>Total Surplus/ (Deficit) Precept</b>	<b>315</b>	<b>211</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>Total Precept</b>	<b>19,804</b>	<b>21,413</b>	<b>24,186</b>

**Assumptions:**

<b>Annual Increase (%)</b>	<b>2.99%</b>	<b>6.63%</b>	<b>12.44%</b>
<b>Annual Increase (£)</b>	<b>£2.19</b>	<b>£5.00</b>	<b>£10.00</b>

Band D Council Tax levels for Fire and Rescue Authorities range between £85.19 in the West Midlands and £128.12 in Durham, with an average of approximately £100.73 per standalone Band D property, which following the above cap rise, gives rise to Northamptonshire being fourth poorest (previously second) funded precepting fire body in the country, as demonstrated in the table.



Therefore, given that NCFRA are £10.34 below the National average, this equates to receiving around £2.69m less than our peers, which equates to losing the funding for around 45 whole-time fire fighters (nearly 20% of our current establishment).

## Efficiency

EFFICIENCY DATA (£000)						
	Actual 2024/25		Actual 2025/26		Forecast 2026/27	
Opening Revenue Expenditure Budget (Net)	31,454		33723		37633	
Less Total Direct Employee Costs	21,653		24521		26478	
Non Pay Budget	9,801		9202		11155	
Efficiency Savings	Recurrent	Non-recurrent	Recurrent	Non-recurrent	Recurrent	Non-recurrent
<u>Direct Employee</u>						
Reduction in Prevention/Protection/ Response Staff	-	383	20	400	0	160
Reduction in Support Staff	296	87	0	0	0	0
<u>Indirect Employee (e.g. training, travel etc.)</u>						
All Indirect Employee Costs	217.77	278.4	93.27	100	546	0
<u>Premises</u>						
Utilities	0	0	0	0	0	0
Rent/Rates	29.8656	0	0	0	0	0
Other Premises Costs	129.652	0	0	50	0	0
Shared Premises	0	0	0	0	0	0
<u>Transport</u>						
Fleet	10.404	0	0	0	255	0
Fuel	0	0	0	0	0	0
Other Transport Costs	20.4	0	0	0	0	0
<u>Supplies and Services</u>						
National Procurement Savings	0	0	0	0	0	0
Local Procurement Savings	112.312	65	18	0	18	0
Other Technology Improvements	0	0	57.74	50	85	0
Decreased Usage	23.46	60	40	0	240	0
<u>Capital Financing</u>						
Revenue Expenditure Charged to Capital	0	0	0	0	0	0
Net Borrowing Costs	0	50	0	0	0	0
<u>Other</u>						
Potential rationalisation of contingency funds based on needs assessment	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total Efficiency Savings</b>	<b>997</b>		<b>409</b>		<b>1,144</b>	
Efficiency Savings as a Percentage of Non-Payroll Budgets	<b>10.18%</b>		<b>4.44%</b>		<b>10.26%</b>	

## Income

INCOME (£000)						
Income Generated from:	Actual 2024/25		Actual 2025/26		Forecast 2026/27	
	Recurrent	Non-recurrent	Recurrent	Non-recurrent	Recurrent	Non-recurrent
Charging policies	72.08		154.61		586.52	
Trading operations	540.16		251.88		232.84	
Shared premises	-		-			
Interest on investments	238.25		388.69		82.84	
Other sources	-		-		1,012.99	
<b>Total</b>	<b>850.49</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>795.17</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,915.19</b>	<b>-</b>

### Direct Employee

#### Recurrent

In 2025/26 there was £0.02m of staff savings, this includes:

- £0.020m from removing a senior Fire Fighter role and replacing it with an operational Fire Fighter role.

#### Non-recurrent

One off savings of £0.4m of savings were achieved through:

- £0.4m removing a Fire Fighter intake from the profiled workforce plan.

### Indirect Employee

#### Recurrent

In 2025/26 there was £0.094m of savings which related to the change to the calculation of the amount of time we expect roles to be vacant when there is a leaver within the organisation.

#### Non-recurrent

£0.1m of one off savings were achieved as a result of the in year allowance for ill health retirements, following a review of likely cases, new and emerging cases were expected to be covered from reserves.

### Premises

#### Recurrent

In 2025/26 there were no savings

#### Non-Recurrent

In 2025/26 there was a £50k saving from the delayed building works following the strategic review of estates plans.

## **Transport**

There has been no increase in savings achieved in this area for 2025/26, we are expecting savings from the improvement in efficiency from the oncoming fleet replacement.

## **Supplies and Services**

Recurrent

In 2025/26 there was:

- £0.018m of savings which related to the reduction in costs through better procurement of operational equipment.
- £0.058m of savings from efficiency from IT licensing procurement.
- £0.040m of savings from better procurement and removing additional contingency in equipment

Non-recurrent

In 2025/26, there was a £0.050m one off savings were achieved as a result of:

- £0.050 of savings from the delaying of an in year implementation of new software, whilst a review of technical requirements was completed.

## **Other**

No other savings were achieved.

## **Future Efficiencies**

Work is under way to look at the future long-term strategy of the service and it is expected that better resource management and utilisation will enable more effective operational coverage of the County and therefore a reduction in associated usage costs and the rationalisation of assets that are surplus to requirements.

## **Collaboration**

The sharing of resources across Enabling Services has ensured that access to specialised resources have been able to be shared and the use maximised across both Fire and Police, this includes:

- Technical IT related skills, such as Enterprise Architecture.
- Information Assurance, including data protection and advice.
- Specialist performance and demand resources have been shared, which includes the cross organisational learnings which have been able to be embedded within both organisations.
- Commercial, including procurement resources have been further shared to ensure the compliance with the national changes to procurement regulations and have been noted as promising areas of practise.
- Organisational Development and cultural change, which is seeking to embed cultural change and improvements.

## **Assessment of Efficiencies**

NFRS has continued to deliver efficiencies in excess of the minimum requirement. However, the focus has continued to be on the

current financial year given the short-term financial settlements and the ongoing review of the organisational Service delivery plan.

The Continuous Improvement Board has been put in place to bring all of these areas together and will ensure that all strands from across the Service and its Enabling Services are aligned in the delivery of its objectives and priorities.

## Part 2: Secondary Information - Efficiency & Productivity

### His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS)

HMICFRS conducted their third full inspection of Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS) in March 2024 and published their report on 18 September 2024. The report is available on the HMICFRS [website](#). In line with the inspection cycle NFRS will be subject to a further inspection in 2025/26 reporting year.

The 2024 inspection demonstrates our commitment to deliver excellent services to the communities of Northamptonshire. We were graded as *Good* in “Making the FRS affordable now and in the future”, and *Adequate* in “Making best use of resources”. The Inspectors said that “there are some good foundations in place and sound financial planning” – and that it is important that NFRS now moves ahead with those plans.

### Collaboration

#### Strategic Priorities 2025-3030

Collaboration with partners and organisations can help NFRS improve efficiencies and productivity by maximising resources, avoiding duplication, improving communication, and fostering innovation. As set out in the 2025-2030 CRMP, NFRS is committed to explore and further develop existing co-responding and partnership working opportunities.

#### Prevention

**We will help people stay safe from fires and other emergencies.**

- 1 Engage with a wide range of partners and national initiatives to ensure we identify opportunities to provide education, interventions and support to prevent and reduce harm and create safer, healthier and more resilient communities.

#### Response

**We will respond immediately and effectively to emergency incidents.**

- 2 As a key partner within the Northamptonshire Local Resilience Forum, ensure we support communities and are prepared to respond effectively when large scale emergencies affecting communities happen.

#### Protection

**We will improve fire safety in the buildings people live and work.**

- 3 Influence safety in the built environment by using our expertise to respond to a range of consultations from partners.

### Shared Services and Resources

#### Enabling Services

NFRS collaborates with Northamptonshire Police in the provision of an Enabling Services function, which delivers a shared support service function as listed earlier in this document. Each department has its own business case and funding arrangements, ranging from 13% to 40% for fire (averaging out to c. 20% for the whole collaboration costs for fire).

#### Fire Control Partnership

NFRS also shares infrastructure with Warwickshire in respect of the Command and Control technology which enables a joint procurement and also provides failover across each FRS. This makes it possible to operate as one control room on two sites.

During 2026/27 we will begin delivering, implementing, and embedding Fire Control National Operational Guidance, supported by aligned training internally and across our partnership with Warwickshire Fire and Rescue. This will ensure a consistent approach and strengthen our ability to provide an effective and resilient service.

#### Operational Capabilities

Fire Welfare Pod is a shared facility across Police, Fire and Local Government Agencies. During 2026/27 NFRS shall seek to enhance its welfare provision through new welfare vans; these shall again be available across partner agencies.

Joint Command Unit (JCU) – shared asset across Northants Police and Fire. This also supports Local Resilience Forum partners and has been deployed across border to support other Police and FRS's.

#### Emergency Entry Collaboration

Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service together with Northamptonshire Police and East Midlands Ambulance NHS Trust have formed a collaboration agreement in the interests of the efficiency or effectiveness of the Emergency Services in dealing with emergency calls where there is a risk of medical harm of a patient inside a premises and the ambulance service is unable to gain access. The Services have developed a procedure to manage these occurrences which Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service provide support in mobilisation of crews to support gaining entry to these premises. To support this NFRS are rolling out enhancements to the Method of Entry training for crews.

#### Emergency Service Cadets

The joint Northamptonshire Emergency Service Cadets Scheme (NESC) runs to engage with young people aged 13-18 in a Blue Light Service curriculum supported by Police, Fire and Ambulance Service. Cadets learn about JESIP principles and volunteer their time to support multi-agency exercises and also community engagement work, post serious incident and for Prevention. The Fire learning modules work links to the UK Fire Cadets curriculum, whilst the Police modules link to the Voluntary Police Cadets programme. Through NESC we maximise the capacity from over 200 young people to support our community-based work.

During 2025/26 NFRS will review how we work with Northamptonshire Police to deliver cadet programmes with the aim of improving our delivery model for Fire Cadets. This will improve our alignment with UK Fire Cadets and ensure specialist youth officers can also deliver targeted interventions as part of our commitment to the Serious Violence Duty.

#### Youth engagement

NFRS during 2025/26 undertook a joint procurement with partners to deliver resources to support early intervention youth programmes following securing £9000 funding via the Serious Violence Duty grant. In addition, the Prevention team also accessed £2502 grants via OPFCC funds to support targeted road safety and water safety as per our CRMP strategic objective. The team also achieved efficiencies through accessing Level 3 and 4 Safeguarding courses via the local Safeguarding Children's Partnership and the Safeguarding Adult Board at

no cost, this statutory requirement would have costs circa £5000 if commissioned to an external provider.

### Volunteers (Community Safety Advocates)

During 2025/26 NFRS reviewed its approach and recording of the use of volunteers across the service. Within 2025/26 we have recorded 252 hrs of volunteering on CFRMIS. This is a 100% increase in the productivity of this resource as previous returns have recorded as zero. This is support through the increase of the number of volunteers from 1 to 7 during 2025/26. With 2026/27 the Service are looking to continue to increase its number of volunteers and the use of them across the service. Based on the UK average economic impact per volunteer data (2021/22 data costs) to be £2012 per volunteer. This equates to circa £14,000.

### Shared Premises

NFRS utilises 25 sites, 22 are Fire Stations. Six of the stations are 'Wholetime,' meaning they are crewed 24/7 by full-time firefighters. A further two are crewed full-time from Monday to Friday, known as 'Variable Crewing,' while the remaining 14 stations are 'On-Call' meaning they have On-Call firefighters who will respond to incidents when alerted. Three Fire Stations have a shared premises commitment. In addition, NFRS has two shared office-based premises with Northamptonshire Police. NFRS estates are also shared with community groups and Telecommunications Services.



### Asset Management and IT Investment

#### Strategic Priorities 2025-2030

We have already started to address some of our challenges, investing significantly in our assets, modernising our digital infrastructure and laying a secure foundation for advanced systems that better meet our needs. NFRS has committed, as set out in the 2025-2030 CRMP, to continue to explore and further drive efficiencies and productivity through our Asset Management and IT investments.

## Sustainability and resilience

We will manage and invest in our service to be agile and fit for the future. Using our resources sustainably and productively while delivering the most value.

- 1 We will take a digital first approach to ensure we deliver solutions that maximise productivity and effectiveness, using data to provide critical business insights which will enable us to focus our services on those who need it most.
- 3 We will develop a productivity and efficiency plan that will ensure we deliver quality services and value for money.
- 4 We will identify innovative solutions to the way we invest in buildings, fleet and equipment to meet emerging risks and hazards.

## Response

We will respond immediately and effectively to emergency incidents.

- 3 Review our Fire Control capability to enhance resilience, functionality and performance as a core function at the centre of our service delivery to help keep our communities safe.

## Asset Purchase, Maintenance and Contracts

NFRS undertake operational equipment, and appliance checks via the Joint Transport and Logistics Team, who manage the inventory and recording/resolution of defects. Work is ongoing to improve this process and review the existing inventories to ensure the most effective and efficient processes are used. We are exploring the use of technology to improve equipment checks and inventories, improving data quality and reducing admin time.

A delivery model assessment was undertaken in 2024/25 followed by procurement activity to support the outsourcing of the HGV Fire Appliance and Special Appliance) Maintenance and Support function. The outsourcing function continues to be embedded in 2026/27 to ensure delivery of the most efficient and effective working practices. In addition, following a successful planning application, progress to build a new joint transport and logistics (including Stores) facility with Northamptonshire Police shall continue in 2026/27 to further drive efficiencies in this area. The Service also in 2025/26 placed orders for eight new Fire Appliances, a new Aerial Appliance and additional driver training appliances. Through the replacement strategy this shall drive further efficiencies in the associated servicing and maintenance of a modern fleet and also drives further efficiencies through reducing the number of defects which arise in an aged fleet profile. This also ensures that our frontline has the most effective and efficient fleet to support their response to the public.

During 2026/27 we shall take delivery of twelve new EV vehicles and commence installation of the associated EV charging infrastructure and some sites. Our investment in technology and infrastructure demonstrates our commitment to reducing our carbon footprint, prioritising safety and wellbeing of personnel and the community.

## Digitalisation and IT Systems

We have made advances in enhancing our operational capabilities through investments in equipment and technology. This includes the continued embedding and enhancing the use of the Operational Learning (Debriefing) System across both Fire and Police.

Within 2025/26 we rolled out a new Duty Management System to the Wholetime and Fire and Rescue Staff. During 2026/27 we shall commence the deliver to On-Call firefighters and the associated integration with the mobilisation system. We have also successfully integrated and rolled out the digitalisation of daily incident information logs, ensure more efficient and

effective use of our IT systems and removing manually driven tasks.

The Service continues its ongoing implementation of the Command and Control system, and a wide range of other process and configuration changes to better enhance the security and efficiency of existing systems and digital process.

Our Prevention and Protection activities are also improving processes and utilising digital technology (CFRMIS) to streamline information recording and expand the capability of operational crews. This has been supported through investment into new devices to support prevention activities for efficient resource usage. During 2025/26 we continued to trial the devices with the longer term intent to also include protection audits and 7(2)(d) inspections.

In 2026/27 NFRS shall provide devices to station crews to enable access to our systems at incidents, as well as when we are out in the community. Alongside software changes this will create a more digital incident ground for response staff – integrating technology and improving situational awareness

During 2026/27 the service will continue to drive the expansion and capability within the CFRMIS system through adding additional modules into the system, namely Vulnerable Persons and Risk Intelligence, these additional modules shall improve the Service's effectiveness in managing risk.

Investment in 2024/25 in a performance management information tool has also started to assist planning, performance, and project management. During 2025/26 this data has helped shape our performance management and productivity returns. During 2026/27 the additional investment into the training of our Data and Insights team will help drive our strategic cover modelling programme of activity and ongoing improvements in the management and reporting of the Service Performance Management Framework.

The Government led Emergency Services Network project to replace outdated radio technology across all emergency services with next generation 4G/5G mobile network will gather pace during 2026/27, as all organisations prepare for transition to the new service which is expected to start in 2027/28.

NFRS have continued to successfully invest in their digitalisations of non-operational processes through their jointly procured systems with Northamptonshire Police to provide a Payroll, HR, and Finance System. In addition, the Service has also benefited from the shared resources and skills to deliver an in-house built HR Case Management System to enable the provision of better data and support to managers and supervisors in the areas that they need it.

As part of the future digitalisation of processes, the Service during 2025/26 commenced the re-procurement of a new central Learning Management System (LMS) which as part of its core specification shall include recording all competency frameworks and training hours (including Operational training). This shall enable the Service to have greater oversight of

training to help inform productivity. During 2026/27 this shall see the finalisation of the procurement activity to then move to an implementation phase.

### **Estates Programme**

NFRS Estates is improving its facilities with a phased Capital Improvement Programme, which adds new fire stations and refurbishes existing ones over a 12-year span. The first part of this delivery programme is underway with new stations in Kettering and Moulton due to commence building phase in 2026/27. The Refresh Project seeks to modernise stations and enhance the health and safety of our staff in ensuring safe work practices. The Service continues to work collaboratively to explore the viability of a joint training site. The Property Service team oversees the whole Estate, conducting ongoing reviews of compliance, maintenance, and improvements.

### **Procurement**

As part of the relationship with the Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner and Northamptonshire Police, a single commercial team oversees all procurement activities. This has improved the Service's value-for-money. The commercial team employs procurement specialists with expertise in commercial law, who monitor supplier performance to make sure the Service receives goods and services as per the contracts it has agreed. They benchmark costs with other fire and rescue services and police forces. Through this dedicated joint service, professionals provide advice to the Service about market conditions, so it can design tenders better to meet its requirements.

The team also provides greater oversight and now scrutinises lower-value tenders (above £24,000) whereas previously only tenders above £100,000 were subject to formal procurement arrangements. The team leads on several national Blue Light frameworks, such as IT working collaboratively with Bluelight Commercial. These practices improve purchasing power and reduce costs.

The team also provide support to the national pensions groups within Police and Fire in regard to the ongoing legislative changes as the framework leads in this sector and assist in ensuring delivery of the new regime in the face of marketplace challenges.

The team are in the final stages of the programme for implementing the remaining statutory provisions of the Procurement Act 2023, and the new Act has enabled the team to review internal buying procedures to reduce duplicated efforts while supporting collaborative procurement agenda. The team in 2025/26 achieved circa £30,000 in savings.

### **Income Generation**

During 2025/26 the Service continued to charge in line with the published charging policy where appropriate. In addition, the Service will review and update the Charging Policy in 2026/27 to ensure full cost recover where possible.

## Operational Productivity

NFRS is fully committed to increasing the productivity of our wholetime operational crews. We are implementing various initiatives to enhance our emergency response, prevention activities and community engagement, including streamlining processes, upgrading technology, and investing in enhancing skills and capabilities.

### Resourcing to risk

NFRS ensures that resources are matched to risk through the use of our Strategic Assessment of Risk, which helps identify and evaluate potential risks and develop plans to mitigate them. This allows us to allocate the appropriate resources where they are most needed and prioritise our risk management efforts accordingly. Additionally, frequent revisions are made to the assessment to ensure that the resources remain aligned with the evolving risk landscape.

### Percentage of appliances crewed and available

#### Response modelling

exercise to review

use of current

operational

resources. This shall

then inform the

revised response

strategy. Effective

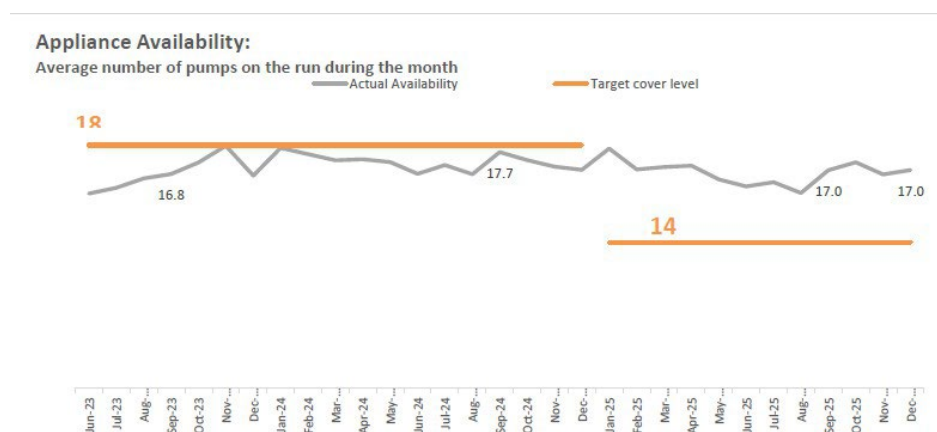
emergency

response requires

resilience, the ability

to quickly mobilise

the right type and number of resources. Measuring the percentage of appliances crewed and available is an effective way of helping deliver this. Over the last year availability has remained largely stable, and we have had 14+ appliances (inc WDS and On-Call) available on circa 97% of occasions.



### Performance Management and Monitoring

The Service's Performance Management framework and reporting process, measures workforce productivity; the Productivity Assurance and Performance Board (PAPB) undertakes ongoing scrutiny of performance and the identification of areas for improvement through the Data and Insights Team reporting. In addition to PAPB, scrutiny of these reports is undertaken through various forums including within the Fire Accountability Board chaired by the Police Fire and Crime Commissioner. As the Service progresses its delivery of the Productivity Plan in line with the CRMP 2025-30 a revised dashboard of Key Performance Indicators has been established for 2026/27, and these shall be monitored through internal Governance arrangements.

## Transformation Activity

In line with the 2025/26 plan the Service, moved forward with **23** of the transformation changes from the previous Emergency Cover Review. Of those identified within the previous plan we have now completed the following:

- Reviewing our standards of operational response
- Rolling out the duty management system (FSR)
- Look at options for aerial capability in Corby
- Enhancing how we capture and use data

Our transformation activity, under this programme will going forward align with the Strategic Priorities set out in the CRMP 2025-30 and will refine how we work, maximise productivity, and enhance our focus ensuring we deliver the best possible service to our communities, in collaboration with our partners. The Service has established a project team to oversee the delivery of the workstreams taken forwarded.

NFRS have embedded managerial arrangements to utilise WDS Staff on the 2-2-4 duty system, and within the training department to support on-call availability to reduce the need to pay bank shift staff at the overtime rate.

NFRS uses a variety of cross-working arrangements to maintain emergency cover including Bank Shifts and WDS staff standing by at On-Call stations to enable the station to maintain availability and readiness to respond. These arrangements are long-established and effective under the existing CRMP.

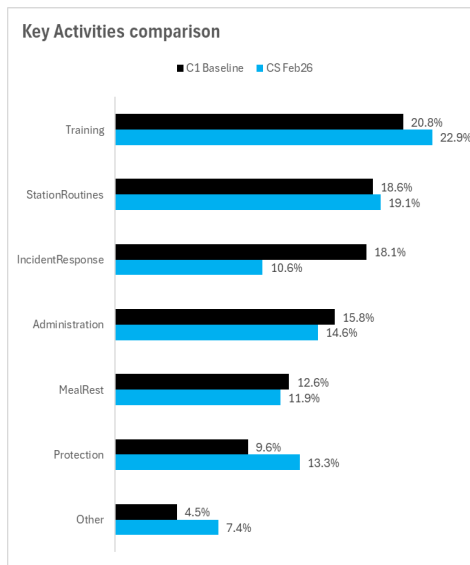
## Outcome-based Activities

During 2024/25, NFRS embedded an assurance framework to monitor productivity and provide assurance around staff usage across all stations; the standards are set out in a response performance standards manual, which is monitored through the framework.

During 2025/26 the service undertook a baseline data capture across wholetime stations across a core 12-hour period (0800 x 2000) over an 8-day period. The duration of the data capture was above the 7-day recommended period as this allowed all watches to complete 2 days and 2-night shifts. The activity list used was that provided by NFCC with some descriptions amended to make sense to NFRS colleagues. A second data collection period was then undertaken using the same methodology. Our data capture for collections 1 and 2 included the Primary Category descriptions only resulting in less detail available for analysis but this kept it simple for crews whilst they familiarised themselves with this type of productivity data capture.

In both collections the top two activities are the same and account for over 40% of time recorded. The remaining activities have all changed between the collections in order and proportion of time. Whilst the top two activities remain consistent between the data captures, they have increased compared with the baseline figure. Incident response has fallen by nearly half which aligns to the reduction in incidents recorded when comparing

Dec25 (507) to Feb26 (386). Time spent on Protection/Prevention activity has increased across the stations between collections, although volume of Home Fire Safety Visits (HFSV) completed in the data collection periods has remained the same. We know that HFSVs take

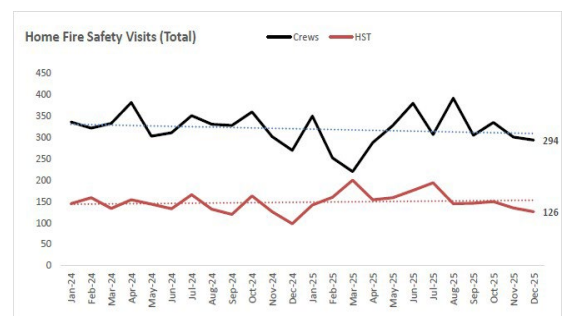
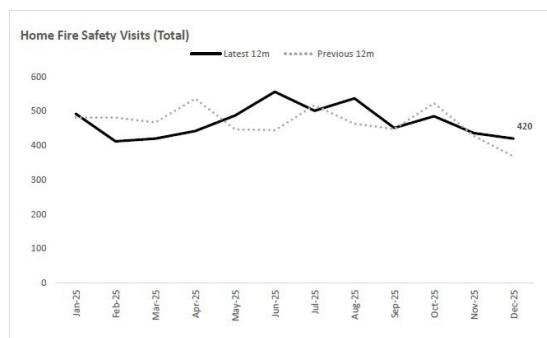


longer to complete on the new form so the increase in time on this activity should be expected.

Overall, during 2025/26 has seen the number of HFSV's being completed above target and focused on High and Very High risk and an improvement in quality through our quality assurance framework. Station Staff both on-call and wholtime are now being used to support the delivery of fire protection checks, freeing up Protection resources and skills to target the highest risk. They will be used to support any Targeted Risk Management with protection where appropriate to reduce local risk. Bank Staff are being used to support the delivery of rural HFSV's while providing on-call availability.

The target for HFSV has been set at 5,000 with a target of 70% of those visits to be undertaken in High and Very High-Risk homes in line

with our CRMP. We have provided greater assurance around this number by visits being allocated by members of our dedicated Fire Prevention Team and giving operational crews improved information of High and Very-High risk areas. Overall HFSV volumes exceeded the delivery in 2024/25 in 2025/26 as per the diagrams with the Service total reaching 5721; this being a 4.6% increase from 2024/25. In addition, the visits also include a quality assurance framework, so the increase represents not only an increase but, an improved level of assurance around the advice being given.



PAPB monitors the productivity of operational firefighters as part of the performance framework, which includes community safety delivery, community engagement activity, risk intelligence and exercising, recruitment and positive action, community impact assessments, IRS reporting, hydrant testing, maintaining competence, staff development, equipment testing and maintenance, BCP testing and health and safety reporting/management; development and apprenticeship programme progress compliance programme. The Service set targets for its Firefighters and monitors activity through the framework; this relates to both gross numerical targets which may be frequency drive. Going forward in 2026/27 PAPB shall also now undertake quarterly data capture utilising the activity framework to continuously

monitor productivity and efficiency and seek improvements where possible.

Other activities and measures include the timely completion of IRS reports (7 days); Each WDS and VCS crew to engage with a Seldom heard (hard to reach) or priority community group at least once a month to promote Community Safety, positive action recruitment and other engagement opportunities; ensure all SSRI and 72d familiarisation visits remain current and maintain adherence with the re-inspection programme as set out; to ensure all hydrants for testing and inspection allocated to each crew remain in date and serviced as per the 6 monthly and annual inspection and all staff completed the associated learning.

Every WDS and VCS watch must plan and deliver one operational assurance exercise each year that consists of a minimum of four appliances against a specific SSRI premises, over the border risk or critical/national response type e.g. Mass decontamination. Currently, each WDS and VCS watch to deliver two wholtime recruitment events per annum one to be a station based positive action and where facilities permit the other is to be a 'have a go' event; to ensure 100% Competency Based training framework sign off and compliance; PDR completion, business continuity/Health and safety reviews.

All measures are monitored through local Community Risk Group performance framework.

### **Strategic Priorities 2025-2030**

The following are how we plan to increase productivity:

#### Station Routines

To maximise productivity of our WDS staff we shall review station routines using the data captures and station comparatives.

#### Resource to Risk

We will continuously monitor our response times to incidents and review the locations and use of resources to ensure we achieve a timely and effective response, with strategic cover resourcing to risk. Additionally, we will complete a task analysis of our incident types to ensure a proportionate and safe response is mobilised. During 2025/26 the Service will scope and assess new real time software tools to enable our Fire Control teams and Response managers to manage our resources and our risk more effectively.

#### The One Risk approach

We will use technology to capture and share local risk information to enhance prevention, protection and response. This will enable crews to work more remotely from appliances and undertake simultaneous activity in the community, such as HFSV's, gathering and reviewing section 7(2)(d) risk information and undertaking Fire Protection activity at the same location or area where appropriate.

#### Days of Action

Operational crews will be working with Prevention and Protection colleagues targeting

specific risks such as tall buildings (high-rise), speaking to residents about home fire safety, smoke alarms, building evacuation, testing water supplies, and updating risk information held.

#### Hydrant Inspections

In 2025/26 we planned to undertake an increased volume of simultaneous activity by operational crews to increase capacity and complete more hydrant inspections, building on current monitored outputs. The planned activity focused operational crews undertaking hydrant inspection across High and Medium risks hydrants. During the previous reporting period we planned to improve productivity by accurately recording time spent on this activity through exploring digital technology to support in the capture of the activity. In 2026/27 we shall undertake further analysis of this to ensure we can increase our delivery of hydrant inspection close to SSRIs.

#### 7(2)(d) Visits

NFRS will continue to gather building and site risk information and conduct visits to keep held data up to date, with inspection frequency and level depending on risk. We plan to improve productivity by accurately recording time spent on this activity and improve the monitoring of the performance of hydrants inspections close to SSRIs via PAPB.

#### Fire Safety Checks

During the course of 2025/26 we developed the use of operational crews for Fire Protection checks, building on previous themed activity such as checking means of escape in shopping centres at seasonal busy periods. During this period in addition to the Fire Protection team, crews provided 187 checks. This is a slight reduction than we had anticipate owing to 10 units being closed and Fire Protection Officers picking up 21 units where the crew were called away or unavailable due to external circumstances.

In line with the CRMP 2025-2030 strategic outcomes, the Fire Protection Strategy sets a target that we shall, over the five-year period, undertake 1,000 proactive protection checks and engagements by response crews.

#### HFSVs

We have improved our risk matrix for the delivery of HFSVs to ensure that crew visits reach more people with vulnerability factors than in previous years, with fewer visits made to people of lower risk, as per the 2024/25 and 2025/26 baselines.

In 2026/27 we recognise that a linear measure of HSFV visits is not the sole indicator of productivity, and we shall continue to measure the quality and output data of the HSFV. The table below demonstrates the ongoing evaluation of the inputs.

Evaluation measurement	24/25	25/26	Productivity comments/context
<b>HFSV Delivery</b>			
Total Service HFSVs (Home Office Annual return)	5468	5721	4.6% better - visits now quality assured so the increase represents more and improved advice being given

of which HFSVs in vulnerable households (Home Office Annual return)	4935	5413	better targeting - reaching more of the target households/individuals we want to reach
% of HFSVs in vulnerable households (info only)	90%	95%	5% better - (wholly attributed to crew HFSVs) same as above but shown as a % of all HFSVs
Total delivered by crew	3756	3910	4% increase in HFSVs delivered by crew
<b>Better HFSV generation</b>			
of which Total service generated through data/ crew direct engagement (HMICFRS return)	3424	3345	3% reduction in actual numbers - good news as its more labour intensive to generate this way
% generated through direct engagement	63%	58%	5% reduction of total HFSVs - another way of expressing the above, good news as more HFSVs being generated by more efficient methods
of which from incoming Partner referral - (more efficient for crews) (HMICFRS return)	1556	1839	increase in actual numbers - see below
% of all HFSV coming from partner referrals	28%	32%	increase as a % of all HFSVs generated - more efficient to get person centred referrals and allocate to crews
<b>Outgoing referrals as a measure of impact</b>			
Total households referred onwards after HFSV for additional support/safety measures (HMICFRS return)	645	670	3.8% increase wholly attributed to crew HFSVs as crew HFSVs resulting in referral have risen from 42 in 24/25 to 168 in 25/26 and some referrals form Home Safety Team have gone down)

### School Visits and Community Engagement

Our crews will continue to increase their presence in priority schools utilising the Staywise package and we will continue to record the time spent on this activity. In line with our strategic priorities of putting communities at the centre of everything we do, we shall also carry out more activities in our communities to aid the development of a wider community safety role ensuring that we are visible and accessible to everyone. Through digitalisation of our processes, we shall then be able to provide accurate reports of activity numbers and time spent by our crews.

### Road Safety

We will introduce a brand new station-based activity to promote road safety awareness to mature drivers.

### Operational assets management

We are seeking to introduce an improved process for change of watch checks/maintenance for appliances and equipment. This shall be linked to the review of the Asset Management system and associated processes.

### Operational Outcome Activity – Data Reporting

The table below provides a summary of completed activities by operational crews for the reporting periods of 2023/24 and 2024/25, and the planned and actual delivery for 2025/26. In addition, the growth in productivity 2026/27 across four key prevention/protection activities:

Activity	2023/24	2024/25	Planned 2025/26	Actual 2025/26	Planned 2026/27
HFSVs	4,004	3,756	3,500	3910	3750**
Hydrant Inspections	804	878	1,680	1360	1680
7(2)(d) Visits*	88	62	N/A	147	135
Fire Safety Checks	23	193	290	187	200***

\*\* Service total Service total for Risk Intelligence gathering and familiarisation. This is a frequency based on risk grading of site.

\*\*Focus shall continue to be on quality and assurance of all HSFV's

\*\*\* Average of 200 per annum for the 1000 target over the CRMP period

### Workforce Capacity

The Service is classed as significantly rural, having nine wholtime appliances Monday to Friday during the day, seven wholtime appliances in the evening and weekends and nineteen on-call appliances. The Service has reduced minimum numbers on appliances to four and utilises a model where any additional wholtime personnel over our global crewing figure provide cover on On-call stations and perform prevention and station duties in that area. In the event of not having any surplus WDS crewing we utilise other operational staff i.e. CRG watch managers, training department personnel or backfill with paid Bank Crewing personnel. NFRS have embedded managerial arrangements to re-assign WDS Staff on the 2-2-4 duty system, and within the training department to support on-call availability to reduce the need to paid bank staff at OT rate. In support of this the organisation has also established a Gold Group to further scrutinise and review the use of overtime across the Service to ensure the most efficient and effective use of resources and good financial management.

NFRS utilises a variety of cross-working arrangements to maintain emergency cover including Bank Shifts, paid staff standing by at On-Call stations to enable the station to maintain readiness to respond, On-Call staff undertaking shifts on career stations for the same purposes. These arrangements are long-established and are effective.

In response to the Your Future Service (ECR) project and with the outcomes of the public consultation on the 2025-30 CRMP and Standards of Operational Response, NFRS will assess the best locations, shift patterns and sustainable delivery model based on the needs of Northamptonshire. This data-led approach may identify the potential financial savings/efficiencies against the primary purpose of ensuring the correct emergency cover across the county.

### 2025/26 - 3% Productivity Target

Through the baseline and subsequent data captures and the assessment of the reporting data around key operational activities undertaken by Wholetime crews, when looking at linear numbers it is clear that the productivity has improved across the key activities. This is further supported through the baseline and subsequent data captures supporting the evidence base of wholetime crews activities captured.

Activity	Productivity %
HFSVs	4.1%
Hydrant Inspections	54%
7(2)(d) Visits*	137%
Fire Safety Audits	-3.1%

Moving forward into 2026/27 the Service shall further assess the delivery of additional productivity targets. This shall not only be on a linear basis and start to assess and evaluate the wider productivity outputs i.e. the impacts of the inputs.

We shall also continue to monitor performance and delivery against our strategic outcomes via a range of Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) and measures determined by national and local performance reporting criteria, Productivity and Efficiency plan outcomes and assurance requirements



**NORTHAMPTONSHIRE  
FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE**